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CONSOLATORY LETTER

To One in

AFFLICTION,

Upon the Loss of

A Near RELATION.

Wm Evans

LONDON:

Printed by *J. Brudenell*, 1701.

A

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To One in

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Upon the Loss of

A Near [illegible] ATION.

BRITISH MUSEUM

LONDON:

Printed by J. Brudenell, 1701.

To the Reverend

Mr. JOHN SHOWER,

Pastor of a Church of Christ in *London.*

Honour'd Sir,

MUch hath our gracious Lord and Saviour done for you, as a Minister of the Gospel, and as a Saint of the Lord; having richly furnished you for his Service and Glory, and filled you with all heavenly Graces of his Holy Spirit, for your own Good and Happiness. All that are honour'd with your sweet Acquaintance, have that from you, and by you, which is most attractive, as having Pleasure and Profit in it. I don't wonder so many Worthies among God's Saints, some gone to Heaven, were so cheared with your Christian Fellowship and Communion; you ushered them apace thither, by your good report of that glorious Place, and by your ripeness for it. And for those who are yet on this side Heaven, they are pleased and profited wh they enjoy a little of your good Company for their help to Glory, by your means, and together with you: You always delightfully receive what they have of Spiritual Good to communicate, and you as soon return some such Good; that it is heap upon heap, and a multiplication of holy Edification, to find, and to leave you. That I, the least of all God's Saints (as you know I must own it, and be a-

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ſhamed) ſhould at any time be granted to ſhare in it; and have not only your Ear, but your Heart, to hear, and feel, whether there be any ſpark of true love in me to God, and Chriſt, and his People, for the increaſe of your joy in God: And that I who am ſo little receptive of what you chearfully impart of Inſtruction and Comfort, am not depriv'd of either of theſe two parts of the Communion of Saints; that you will vouchſafe to take any whit from me, and readily repay it with Intereſt upon Intereſt; all this is none of the ſmalleſt marks of your eminent Piety, right Zeal for God and Chriſt, and true love to all his Children and Servants.

Sir, having a Word by me in Seaſon, as I think, your due and right it is to have it; and none will grace it and honour it more than your ſelf. It is a Letter of my long ſince Deceas'd worthy and moſt loving Brother, Mr. Elias Delm, *Written when Paſtor of the* French *Reformed Church at* Rotterdam, *to my dear and well-belov'd Siſter, Mrs.* Elizabeth Dubois, *newly Deceas'd, upon the ſad occaſion of her Widowhood, about Sixty Years ago. I found it with ſome other pieces of my dear Brother's Writings in her Chary-keeping; ſhe priz'd this Letter in particular, and reaped, I truſt, much good by it. I Dedicate my Tranſlation of it to your dear ſelf, craving your Patronage, as well as your Acceptance; becauſe changing your Perſon, high Function, and ſome other Circumſtances, it may alleviate your preſent great Affliction; and becauſe ſo doing, it may be a means, under God, for many more yet to reap Soul-benefit under Afflictions.*

You are now, endeared Sir, *under your Grief, ſurrounded, to my knowledge, with the choiceſt Friends, that bring to you out of their rareſt Treaſures, Things new and old, the ever freſh and green everlaſting things of the Old and New Teſtament, to Comfort you, God's Friend, and Their's,*

Theirs, what they can, by Word, and by Letter; ſo that this Fragment ſeems to be ſuperfluous, were it not that you account nothing to be ſo, and to be loſt, that has Aliquid Chriſti *in it, and which ſavours of his Spirit. And, what a depth of loſs had I been in, had you not, in my unaccountable Failings and deep Melancholy, taken me by your skilful and gentle Hand out of the Grave of my Sins, the worſt of Graves? Bleſſed be the holy Name of the Lord, who remembred me in my low eſtate; and bleſſed be you, his happy Inſtrument, and Him your faithful Colleague, who aſſiſted in that Labour of abundant Love; and the good Lord ſpare you both for further and further Good to God's Church and People, thoſe you have the particular Charge of, and others alſo, who tho' not ſo immediately belonging, yet are welcomed, as my ſelf, who am denied none of your beſt Counſels and ſerventeſt Prayers, both in private and in publick.*

Now the Wonder-working God, ſupport, ſupply, and refreſh you in this ſore Affliction, as the taking from you your ſweet and meet Conſort, and in all your deepeſt Sorrows, give ſuch an abundance of Conſolation in your Breaſt, as that you may alſo fill many Baskets-full, for the ſupporting, ſupplying, and refreſhing the indigent and ſorrowful Hearts in God's Zion; it is the Prayer of,

Reverend Sir,

Your very affectionate Friend,

London, July 29. 1701.

and very humble Servant,

J. D.

BRITISH MUSEUM 1780

Reverend Sir,

Your very affectionate Friend,

and very humble Servant,

J. D.

London, July 29. 1701.

A

A Conſolatory LETTER.

To my very dear and loving Siſter

Mrs. *ELIZABETH DU BOIS*,

Widow of Mr. *Samuel Du Bois* in *Canterbury*.

Dear and Well-beloved Siſter,

ALthough you have with you our moſt honour'd Father, from whom you may draw Comforts continually, as from a moſt abounding Spring, and having been ſo well Inſtructed your ſelf from your Infancy, I doubt not but that you are fully ſupply'd with Courage and Reſolution, againſt the Adverſities our Nature is liable unto; yet, as we do not diſdain to refreſh our ſelves with our Friends, even of meaner quality, in token of the Affection we bear them, and to ſhew we take it well at their Hands, altho' we have wherewith ſufficiently to ſatisfie our Hunger, and to quench our thirſt; ſo I perſwade my ſelf that you will take this token of my Love in good part, tho' it be but ſome portions of the ſame Conſolations that are not wanting to you elſewhere.

I will not tell you, *dear Siſter*, That you either may or ought, in this great Affliction, to be without Sorrow; this would be to perſwade you to be other than the Lord has made you: *Abraham* Wept at the

Death of *Sarah* his Wife; *Iſaac* at that of his Mother; *Joſeph* and his Brethren at that of their Father; and *Naomi* would be call'd *Mara*, ſaying, That the Lord had turned her Joy into Bitterneſs, for the loſs of her Husband and Children; *Mary* and *Martha* ſorrowed for the Death of their Brother *Lazarus*; and even our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf grieved for the loſs of his Friend, and the Widows mourned for the Death of *Dorcas* their Benefactor.

As we are Men, we are ſubject to Afflictions, and Grace does not aboliſh Nature, but rectifies what of Sin and Corruption is come into it: What there is of Sin in the Affections of the Unregenerate under their Afflictions, is, That as wild Horſes that are looſe, firſt they ſtray out of their Road, and then they ſcamper and run with all unbridl'd Fierceneſs, not knowing nor keeping any meaſure; that is to ſay, they take their run where they ſhould not, and beyond what they ought: As at other times they are like dull Horſes, that will not move nor ſtir *then* and *when* they ſhould go; or like to meer Jades, which go too heavily and ſluggiſhly; that is to ſay, That ſometimes they move not at all as they ſhould, or much leſs than they ought. For to clear up this by Example in the affection of Sorrow in the Unregenerate. Some there are who Sin by Excels, as thoſe that mourn for their neareſt Relations, Becauſe they have not hope of the Bleſſed Reſurrection, 2 *Theſſ.* iv. 13. Others, on the quite contrary, if the Lord afflicts them, either by ſuch an Affliction, or ſome other, they remain as Stocks, without being moved in the leaſt, not having a due and moderate Sorrow, by reaſon of the love of Carnal Pleaſures, or other unjuſt and undue Affections. They are thoſe which the Prophet ſpeaks of, Jer. v. 3. ſays he, *Thou haſt ſtricken them, but they*

have

have not grieved. But the believing Chriſtian keeps th middle between theſe two Extreams; and, as his Sorrow comes from due Cauſes, and none other; ſo alſo it is moderated by Conſolations from the Word of God; and being ſuch, it is a ſign and evidence to him, not only that he is Born an Humane Creature; but alſo that he is New-born, and made a new Creature: Not but that it muſt be acknowledg'd, that his Infirmities will make his Grief to ſtray beyond its due bounds; but he has alſo the ſtrength of God's Spirit, which ſupplies the place of a Bridle and Reins, for to bring it within the compaſs of them. I pray you then to conſider what your Sorrow may duly be, and what, on the contrary, would be an evil Sorrow in your preſent Condition.

All Sorrow that is lawful ought to proceed from a juſt Love; for the Affection of Love is the Spring of that of Grief and Joy: As the preſence of the Thing beloved doth chear us, ſo its abſence grieves us. Now the Stream cannot be pure, unleſs the Spring be ſo too. He then whom you did love, and who loved you as a very dear Husband, hath, by his abſence, ſet you on Weeping and Mourning; you lov'd him not only for himſelf, and becauſe he lov'd you, in that he wiſh'd you well, had done, and would yet have done a great deal of good, both to you and his dear Children; but alſo you lov'd him for his own ſake; and becauſe being given to you, you would and did procure, and would have yet procured as much good to him, as to your own ſelf. Now that which afflicts you, is, becauſe you have him no more to love him, nor to be belov'd by him in ſuch a manner as formerly: You have him no more for to render to him the Duties of a good and loving Wife; you have him no more to receive

from him thoſe Reſpects of a good and loving Husband; for as then when you enjoy'd the one and the other, you were a ſubject of Joy, becauſe real Vertue finds as much or more Love to do Good, than to receive Good: Now not having him, Sorrow has ſucceeded your Joy, as well on the one as the other Conſideration; this is as natural, as it is for Obſcurity to follow the Light then when the Sun is Set; nay, you yet riſe up higher, and your Sorrow comes not only from that, That you have loſt a good Husband, but alſo, becauſe it is the Lord which hath taken him from you; you ſay with *Naomi*, Ruth i. 21. *The Lord hath teſtified againſt me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me.* For albeit, that in every Chaſtiſement having regard to the Fatherly love of God, from whence it proceeds, and the end for which he ſends it, we have reaſon even to rejoice, as we are exhorted, To count it all Joy when we fall into divers Temptations, yet in it ſelf every Affliction for the preſent ſeems not joyous, but grievous, *Heb.* xii. 12. And, indeed, as a Child well inclined, altho' he knows his Father loves him whilſt he corrects him, and does not correct him, but becauſe he loves him, yet is very ſorry he has offended ſo good a Father, that he has given him occaſion to take the Rod in Hand; ſo alſo the true Believer, altho' he knows that God afflicts him for his good and profit, yet it is impoſſible (his Heart being tender, by reaſon of the love his Heavenly Father bears, and that he bears to God his Father) but that he will find himſelf touched with Sorrow for having offended him, and given him cauſe to alter his ordinary Countenance towards him. Thus howbeit that God was appeaſed towards *Miriam* upon the Prayer of *Moſes*, yet would have her to humble her ſelf before her Husband, *Numb.* xii. 14. So far Sorrow is not only

lawful:

lawfull and an effect of Humanity, but is alſo Holy and Divine, and an effect of Piety: But it would be a bad Sorrow, in ſuch a Condition as yours, which ſhould proceed from an Opinion, That this Affliction were a token that God does not love you, or from a belief that you have not only loſt Much, but that you have loſt All; or from ſuffering ſuch a conception, That the Lord who beſtowed that means of Good upon you, cannot, and will not do you any more Good, either without means, or by other means; or from fancying that he whom you Condole is not as well, or better than when he was with you; or from a miſtruſt that you ſhall never ſee him again, and ſhall never enjoy him in a far better manner after this preſent Life, than you did in this Life.

As to you then, you know, That the Lord Chaſtens every one whom he loves, and Scourges every Son whom he owns, *Heb.* xii. And that That is ſo far from being a ſign that God doth not love us, or that he will love us no more, that, on the contrary, even he himſelf hath declared, That if we are without Chaſtiſements, whereof all are partakers, we ſhould be Baſtards and not Legitimate Children. For altho' God's Children do not always give him ſome ſpecial particular occaſion to be angry with them, by ſome particular Fall, from which it is oftenеſt his manner to raiſe them up again by ſome Chaſtiſement, as it hapned to *David*, to *Aaron*, and *Miriam*, and Others; yet becauſe there is none that walketh ſo perfectly, but that he ſlips and halts, and it being ever our Duty to ſtrive after Perfection, and to endeavour ſtrenuouſly to amend even our Common Faults and Infirmities, and we being in danger of not thinking of them, if he did not continually pull us by the Ear, as 'twere: He does therefore do it one

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while by Sickneſs, another time by the loſs of ſome of our neareſt and deareſt Relations; and at other times, by ſome other Adverſity; ſo that in the Iſſue there is no true Believer but what may ſay, not only with the Lips, but from the bottom of the Heart, and not by a general Knowledge, and becauſe others have been heard to ſay it, but by an experimental Knowledge, by his own experience, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy Statutes.* Verily not only does the Lord viſit us, to raiſe us up and to correct us for what is paſt, but to admoniſh us to be upon our Spiritual Watch for time to come; for as the ſtill Waters are the Waters that corrupt; ſo Eaſe and Proſperity cauſeth often that we think leſs of God, and that one waxes fat and grows proud: To keep us from this, we alſo have need to be troubled in the School of Adverſity, much more we that confeſs our ſelves beneath the Holineſs of the Holy Apoſtle, who nevertheleſs needed a Thorn in the Fleſh, leſt he ſhould be lifted up above meaſure, 2 *Cor.* xii. 7.

There are other ends alſo why the Lord does afflict us, namely, That we ſhould approve our ſelves to our ſelves, and to the Godly, and to confound and put the Wicked to ſilence; of this St. *Peter* ſpeaks, 1 *Pet.* i. 6. *In whom ye rejoice, tho' now for a ſeaſon, if need be, ye are in heavineſs, in divers temptations, that the tryal of your Faith, much more precious than gold (which may and is notwithſtanding tried by Fire) may turn to praiſe, honour and glory, when the Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſhall be revealed from Heaven.* It is very eaſie for a Man, when all things proſper with him, to boaſt that he loves God, that he does truſt in God, and that he is ready to do any thing for him; but to be able to ſay with *Job*, *Job* ii. 10. *Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and ſhall*

we

we not receive evil? belongs to none but him that truly loves God, and not the temporal Bleſſings of God only. He that can ſay this in Sincerity, has hereby an evidence that is ſure, That Faith, Love to God, and the Grace of Patience, have taken very deep rooting in his Heart, and from thence may conclude, that he hath right to all the Promiſes of God made to thoſe who do love him, and do put their truſt in him. And thus do we glory even in Tribulations, knowing that Tribulation worketh Patience, and Patience Experience, and Experience Hope; which maketh not aſham'd, becauſe the love of God is ſhed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghoſt which is given to us, *Rom.* v. 3. So alſo in enduring Afflictions, we render our ſelves approved to our Brethren, and are hereby an example unto them, for to encourage them to ſerve the Lord with us: When they ſee that we take ſo much favour and delight in God's Service, that we continue and abide conſtant in it, in the midſt of all the Adverſities into which he plunges us; ſo the Apoſtle St. *James* propounds to us the Patience of the Prophets, and that of *Job* for our pattern and imitation, *Chap.* v. 10, 11. And in *Heb.* xii. they, amongſt others, are call'd *Witneſſes, who by faith and patience have patiently endured Afflictions*; for he came from ſpeaking of them at the end of the former *Chap.* And why *Witneſſes?* but that by their Faith and Patience they have teſtified to us, how greatly they eſteemed their Captain, for whom they ſuffered all things willingly, ſhewing and approving themſelves thereby to be the true Servants of God, and inducing us to become their Companions in Service. Beſides, Afflictions being born patiently, it ſerves to confound and make aſham'd the Devil and all his; *Haſt thou not conſidered my Servant Job,* (as it is ſaid to him in *Job* ii.) *that there is none like*

unto

unto him on the earth; a man perfect and upright, fearing God and eſchewing evil? Yea, he ſtill retains his Integrity, and thou haſt provoked me againſt him to Kill him without a cauſe. And how great is the Glory, to Serve the God of Glory, for a Crown of Glory? As the Wicked then by their Proſperity cannot conclude that God loves them; ſo the Godly in Adverſity cannot gather that God doth not love them, ſince it ſerves to ſo many good Ends.

You know likewiſe, that notwithſtanding that you have loſt *much*, yet you have not loſt *all*; for there are four ſorts of good Things or Bleſſings of God. In the firſt and higheſt degree, There is Eternal Life: In the ſecond degree, There are Spiritual Bleſſings, the remiſſion of Sins, the imputation of Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, Sanctification, Aſſurance of our Election, the gift of Perſeverance; nay, and the gift to grow in Grace daily and continually: In the third degree, are the means vouchſafed us to Serve God freely apart, and in his Church, by the Hearing of the Word, the Receiving of the Sacraments, and other ſuch-like publick Exerciſes of Piety: And in the fourth place, There are Temporal Bleſſings. Among theſe are ſuch as thoſe that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt names, *Matth.* xix. 29. *Father, Mother, Wife,* (and by proportion alſo, *Huſband*) *Children, Brethren, Siſters, Houſes, Lands*; what is neceſſary for Feeding and Cloathing, of which he ſpeaks in *Matth.* vi. *A good name, which is better than precious Oyntment*, Eccleſ. vii. and all other ſuch-like. Now you yet retain, and will ſtill retain, by hope, until you ſhall poſſeſs by enjoying, the good Things of the firſt kind; and you know they are ſuch, that all being reckon'd up, *The Sufferings of the preſent time are not to be compared to the future Glory which is to be revealed in us,*

Rom.

Rom. viii. 18. And in this reſpect it is ſaid, That *our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us an eternal weight of glory, excelling Excellent*, 2 Cor. iv. 17. Where, methinks the Apoſtle does as it were imitate the manner of ſpeaking of little Children, who having beheld ſomething that is Great, and not being able to expreſs the Greatneſs by Fadom or other Meaſures, will ſay, They have ſeen a great, great Ship; or a great, great Temple; or a great, great Houſe; ſo likewiſe the Apoſtle, not being able to Fadom or Meaſure, the Length, the Breadth, the Height and Depth, of the Excellency of our Glory and Beatitude to come, ſays only, That it will be a Glory exceeding Excellent.

You alſo retain the Bleſſings of the ſecond kind by Faith, and by Experience; and you know that thoſe are things which *eye hath not ſeen, nor ears heard, and which never entered into the heart of man to conceive, which God hath prepared for thoſe that love him*, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks 1 *Cor.* ii. 9. For that it is there ſpoken, not only of Eternal good Things, but alſo of Spiritual, is diſcernible from that which precedes and follows; particularly from *Ver.* 10. where thoſe things are ſaid to be revealed to us by the Spirit of God; as in *Ver.* 11. they are ſimply called the things of God; and in *Ver.* 12. The things which are given us of God; and in *Ver.* 13. Spiritual things, which we muſt underſtand of all the Bleſſings which we enjoy here below, and which we wait for in Heaven above; which I note, becauſe that it ſeems to me that this paſſage of Scripture, at leaſt among the popularity, is often underſtood, as if the meaning were ſuch, That the Excellency of our Eternal Happineſs in the Life to come, will be ſuch, That Eye never ſaw, nor Ear

heard, nor the Heart hath conceived of in this Life, which in it self is true, and is proved by the saying of St. *John* in his first Epistle iii. 2. *Beloved, we are now the Sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be:* and by that of St. *Paul*, who having been taken up into Paradice, could not express any other thing, only, That he had heard unutterable Words, which was not lawful for him to express, 2 *Cor.* xii. 4. But the Apostle's intention is different in that place, and he would say, That that which is revealed to us by the Holy Ghost, in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, of his Benefits, as well present as future, they are things so Excellent, That never did Eyes, Ears, or Hearts of Men, without the Gospel-Revelation, and the Spirit of God, see, hear, or conceive any things that can compare and be parallel with them. For, indeed, they are things which the Angels desire to look into the bottom of. As this was formerly prefigur'd by the looking of the Cherubims to the Propitiatory, which was above the Ark; and particularly all this is true under the New Testament, because that according to the Testimony of Christ, we there behold things which the Prophets and Kings have desired to see, and they have not seen them; we hear things which they have desired to hear, and have not heard them. And really, what is there that is more Raised, more Glorious, Greater, and which is more Consolatory than this, That Jesus Christ, the same true God with his Father, That he was Manifested in the Flesh, Justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, Preached unto the *Gentiles*, seen in the World, and lifted up into Glory; That he is made to us of God, Wisdom,

Luke x. 24.

1 *Tim.* iii. 16.

Righ-

Righteouſneſs, Sanctification and Redemption. This paſſes all the Riches, all the Conveniencies, all the Honours, and all the Contentments of the World. And whoſoever, by Faith, hath truly been made partaker of that which God offers us in his Word, may ſay with the Apoſtle *Paul*, *Phil.* iii. 8. *Truly I count all things loſs and dung in compariſon of the excellency of the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt my Lord; and do account them but dung that I may win Chriſt.* 1 *Cor.* i. 30

The Lord does yet grant you this good Bleſſing, that you may continue in his Church in the which you have been nouriſhed and brought up from your Childhood; and this Benefit deſerves to be placed in the third place, becauſe it ſerves as a Ladder, in which the Preaching of the Word, the Adminiſtration of the Sacraments, the Prayers, Confeſſions, and giving of publick Thanks, do ſerve as ſo many ſteps to lift us up to the firſt before-recited Benefit. From hence it is that *David*, tho he found himſelf in a condition of a Fugitive from his own Country, diſtanced from his Father's Houſe, diſpoſſeſſed of all his Goods, ſpoil'd of his Honours and his Riches, and his Wife was Raviſhed from him, doth now at this time proteſt that he did ask of the Lord but one thing; not denying but that he had alſo asked to recover the other things which he had loſt; but intimating that he had been more concern'd about, more deſired, and more ſought for this one thing than all the others: *I have asked* (ſaith he) *one thing of the Lord, and I will beg it, that I may dwell in the houſe of the Lord all the days of my life, for to behold the face of the Lord, and to viſit diligently his Palace.* Pſ. xxvii. 4. And the Daughter-in-law of *Eli Phyneas* his

Wife, having heard the ſad news of the Defeat of her People, of the Death of her Husband, and of the Death of his Father-in-law, ſhe her ſelf being at the point of Death, Nam'd the Child of which ſhe was Delivered *I-cabod*, ſaying, according to the ſignification of that Word, *The Glory of God is departed from Iſrael*, becauſe the Ark of God was taken. Here is ſhe overwhelm'd with Sorrow by different Cauſes, yet ſhe mentions none but this one, This of the taking and loſs of the Ark of God, unto which was tied up a great part of the publick Worſhip of God in thoſe days; and I perſwade my ſelf that you do acknowledge that ſhe has reaſon ſo to do.

As to the Benefits of the fourth ſort, it is true, That to a good Wife, a good Husband is one of the principaleſt, ſince the Husband is the Head of the Woman; but I hope you have not ſo much your Eye fixt upon him alone, but that you conſider alſo how many the Lord ſpares and yet leaves to you; ſo that you may yet taſte how good God is. All theſe Conſiderations make that your Sorrow is not like to thoſe, who having loſt ſome Temporal Bleſſing of God, do carry themſelves ſo as if *all* were loſt; like unto thoſe little Children, from whom if one takes ſome of their Toys, they throw far away, thro' deſpite, all elſe that is left them, not at all contenting themſelves. You know yet, That however the Lord has depriv'd you of a great Inſtrument of good, both to your ſelf and to your Children, it does not therefore follow, that God will not, or cannot do more for you; on the contrary, you do ſupport your ſelf, not only by the general Promiſes which are made to the Children of God, as this, *The Mother may forget her ſucking Child, that ſhe ſhould not have pity on the Son of her Womb*;

or

or if the Mother ſhould forget them, yet will not I forget thee. Behold I have written them upon the palm of my hand, Iſa. 49. 15. You know what the Affections of a Mother are towards her Sucking Child: Judge then by that, That ſince in the ſame proportion, as God is greater than a Mother, ſo muſt alſo the Affection of God towards his Children be ſo much greater than that of a Mother towards her Children. And how great then muſt that Affection be which is in God towards you? And what great reaſon have you not to fear his forgetting you? This will cauſe you to ſay with *David*, Pſ. xxvii. 10. *Tho' my Father and Mother had forſaken me, yet the Lord will take me up.* But you likewiſe have the ſpecial Promiſes to the Widows and Orphans to ſupport you, and by the care he has declared that he will have of them, naming Himſelf, *Pſ.* lxviii. 5. *A Father of the fatherleſs, and a Judge of the widows.*

You doubt not neither, but that your dear Husband (of whoſe Faith, and Love, and Fear of God, and love to his Neighbours you have ſeen ſo many ſigns) is much better with God, and in the company of Angels and bleſſed Saints, than he could poſſibly be here in this Valley of Tears; having learned, That the Righteous when they die, they are taken from the Evil to come. *Iſa.* lvii. 12. *That they enter into peace, and do reſt in their beds; that bleſſed are the dead that die in the Lord; for they reſt from their labours, and their works do follow them.* Rev. xiv. 13. *And that if our earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building with God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,* 2 Cor. v. 1. And that in this reſpect, to thoſe who have lived Goſpel Converſations, it is much better for them to diſlodge

hence,

hence, *Ph.* i. 23. For as their Souls come to the enjoyment of all that's Good; ſo their Bodies do ſuffer no Evil; therefore hence does the Scripture compare the Death of the Body to a Sleep: So that you have no Anxiety on that ſide; and the Apoſtle's Exhortation is deeply rooted in your Heart; 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 13, 14.—*I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are aſleep, that ye ſorrow not even as others that have no hope; for if we believe that Jeſus dyed and roſe again, even ſo them which ſleep in Jeſus, will God bring with him.*

And as the ſame Faith which dwelt in him, does alſo dwell in you, you believe that you ſhall follow him one day there where he is, and without much enquiring whether you ſhall know him again, (as it may poſſibly be) you know at leaſt that you ſhall ſee him and know him in Heaven much better than you did here; and altho' the Affection which is grounded upon temporal Reſpects ceaſeth in Heaven, becauſe our Lord tells us, In the Reſurrection there is no taking nor giving in Marriage, becauſe they ſhall be like the Angels of God in Heaven, *Matth.* xxii. 30. This Affection ſhall be ſwallowed up by that which we ſhall all bear towards God. And this is one of the reaſons for which the Apoſtle ſays, *Now theſe three things abide, Faith, Hope, Charity*; but the greateſt of theſe is Charity, becauſe that Charity does not only remain now, as the two others, but will remain after this Life, it will abide everlaſtingly: Then when we ſhall be ſitting down upon the ſame Table, and at the ſame Banquet, with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*. Now if we ſhall mutually embrace each other, it is a ſign we ſhall know one another, ſince that Love follows Knowledge.

Briefly,

Briefly, to ſum up what I have to ſay: There is a great deal of difference between your Sorrow that is good, and an evil Sorrow; becauſe this ſprings from good Conſiderations which do not gainſay the Word of God, but are rather founded upon it; on the other ſide, the bad Sorrow ariſes in ſome from many other Conſiderations which are contrary to it, which are as ſo many open Springs whence their Grief flows forth; but the Word of God furniſhes you with a great many other Conſiderations, to ſtop and dry it up.

And therefore in the ſecond place, As the more Springs there are, from which the Water flows into one and the ſame River, that ſwells and overflows the more; ſo alſo, the bad Sorrow exceeds the degree and Meaſure according to which the other is moderated. That bad Sorrow is the cauſe that Complaints or Murmurings are made againſt God; that Perſons wiſh for Death; that they would almoſt bring the Dead to Life again; and that they refuſe all Conſolation: Why does God deal with me in this manner? Why is this Diſaſter and this Misfortune hapned to me? And why ſo ſoon, or why not long hence? Theſe are the Murmurings of worldly Men and Women, by which God is Accuſed, either directly or indirectly: On the quite contrary, behold the Voice of the Godly Soul, *I kept ſilence, and opened not my mouth, becauſe, Lord, it is thou haſt done it*, Pſ. xxxix. 10. O unhappy Creature that I am! better for me I had not been Born; better that I had dyed, or why did I not dye with him? or why did he remain to live with me, will they ſay yet? Theſe notwithſtanding would find themſelves much at a loſs, if God ſhould take them at their word; not but that the

ſtrength

ſtrength of Temptation may ſometimes draw like Speeches from the Holieſt; ſo we find 'twas with *Job* and *Jeremiah*, who Curſed their Birth-days; and *David* lamented himſelf in this manner upon the Death of his Son *Abſalom*, 2 Sam. xviii. 33. *Would to God I had dyed for thee, O Abſalom, my Son, my Son.* He was much better diſpoſed then, when the Lord had taken away his Son, he ſpeaketh after he was riſen from the Ground, Waſhed and Anointed himſelf, he proſtrated himſelf in the Houſe of the Lord, and took his Refreſhment, *When the child was alive I faſted and wept, for I ſaid, who knows whether the Lord will have pity on me, to let the child live? But now he is dead, why ſhould I faſt? Can I bring him to life again to come to me? I go to him, he ſhall not come to me*, 2 Sam. xii. 12. This is the true frame and carriage of the Godly, when he has loſt ſome of thoſe he moſt dearly cheriſhed. Thus ought he to ſpeak principally, then when he whom God hath taken to himſelf was ſuch, that he has all reaſon to believe that he belonged to the Covenant of Grace; altho' this were not ſo clear and apparent, yet hopeing the beſt, and remitting the whole to God. He ought to ſubmit to his Holy Will; *Job* is a ſufficient proof hereof, whoſe Children being Dead, in a condition in which they did, or at leaſt might have Sinned and Blaſphemed againſt God in their Hearts; for, Why not that time alſo, as well as at other times? Yet the Tydings being brought him, he did not, and ſaid not any other than this, he roſe up and rent his Mantle, and caſting himſelf on the Ground, proſtrated himſelf before the Lord, and ſaid, *Naked came I out of my Mother's Womb, and naked ſhall I return thither; the Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away,*

away, and bleſſed be the Name of the Lord. If in every ſort of Death the Name of God is to be bleſſed, how much more in the caſe of thoſe, whoſe death we are perſwaded was the Death of his Saints; ſince the death of his Saints is precious in his ſight, *Pſ.* cxvi. 15. If the Believer cannot always contain himſelf in theſe terms, but is ſometimes tranſported with exceſs of Words, as thoſe of *David*, *Job*, and *Jeremiah*, it is rather through inconſideration, than through pure and deliberate Naughtineſs; and as he ought, and by the Grace of God he can come to himſelf and be compoſed; and as he can and ought, ſo alſo in the end he does do it. In this manner the Prophet having let himſelf ſlip ſo far as to ſay, *Pſ.* lxxiii. 13. *Howbeit it is in vain that I have cleanſed my heart, and that I have waſhed my hands in innocency, for I am beaten continually, and my chaſtiſement returned every morning*; yet came to himſelf again, as he teſtified in the words of *Ver.* 21. *Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my Reins*; and Ver. 22. *So fooliſh was I and ignorant, I was as a beaſt before thee*; Ver. 23. *Nevertheleſs I am continually with thee, thou haſt holden me by my right-hand*; Ver. 24. *Thou ſhalt guide me with thy Counſel, and afterwards receive me to glory.* This is alſo a fault in our Sorrows, when one refuſes the Comforts of the Word of God, ſo as not to admit them, unto which fault the Prophet acknowledges himſelf to have been ſubject; *Pſ.* lxxvii. 2. *My Soul refuſed to be comforted.* To prevent this by a contrary frame, we muſt ſuck, with all our might, the Comforts of the Breaſts of the Church, which are the Old and New Teſtament, according to the ſaying of the Prophet, *Iſa.* lxvi. 10, 11. *Rejoice ye with Jeruſalem, and be glad all ye that love her;*

her; rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her; that ye may ſuck and be ſatisfied with the breaſts of her conſolations, that you may milk out and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. This is that which yo do by your ſelf alone, in entertaining your ſelf with the Providence of God to which you bring this Affliction, lying at his Foot; and therefore, as you cannot, nor ought not, ſo you will by no means reſiſt. It belongs not to private Perſons to controul the Actions of Kings, as *Elihu* ſays *Job* xxxiv. 18. *Shall it be ſaid unto a King, thou art Wicked?* And to the Chief among the People, thou art Wicked? How much leſs ought we to ſpeak evil of the Actions of the King of kings? It is the Argument of the ſame *Elihu*, in the ſame place, *Ver.* 19. *How much leſs to him that accepteth not the perſons of Princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor, for they are all the work of his hands.* But above all, we muſt not controul the Actions of good Kings, who we know do all the beſt they can for their Subjects. Now the Lord is not only a King of Power and Dominion over all his Creatures, but he is a King of all Grace to his Saints, and to all the Faithful that duly obey him and ſubmit unto him; and therefore all that he does, he does for our good, as we ſhall find it by experience, if we take diligent notice of his Doings; but if we could not ſo well diſcern, yet it is our duty to be holily quiet and dumb before the Lord, to eye Him, and to wait upon Him. *Pſ.* xxxvii. 7. Do you comfort your ſelf with God's gracious Preſence, who, as the Refiner, ſtands by his Furnace then when he has caſt us in it for to try and purifie us, and will not ſuffer us to be tempted above what

he

he will enable us to bear; He will with the Temptation make a way to eſcape, and give us ſtrength to bear his Hand.

And laſtly, He will bring us out of the Furnace, and place us in his Treaſury, as Veſſels of Honour in his Palace of Glory: This we muſt pray for, both the one and the other, as I do, with all my Heart, for all that which is neceſſary for your Comfort, my dear and well-belov'd Siſter, who will ever have in me,

A moſt faithful and aſſured Brother,

Elias Delmé.

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